1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

the pulp surrounding the wild cacao (*Theobroma bicolor* ?). This same writer (b: 308) likewise mentions a drink made from coconuts; it was sweetened by the addition of ripe plantains or wild honey.

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

There is no trace of any division in clans or exogamic kinship groups. The tribal organization of these primitive tribes was essentially along democratic lines.

In former days the Miskito do not appear to have been ruled by a supreme chief, except during war time, when a commander was chosen by an assembly of the old men, in order to direct the military operations (M. W.: 307). The choice fell generally upon a warrior celebrated for his prowess. According to Exquemelin (French edit.: II, 264) preference was given to an Indian who had accompanied the buccaneers, but with the restoration of peace his authority ceased.

In the legends of the Miskito there are records of individuals seizing the powers of government by violence. The insignia peculiar to a chieftainship seemed to consist of a wooden scepter and of a metal breastplate depending from the neck. The powers of the numerous priest-doctors (*sukya*) were also very great, but it is not known just how much they intervened in governmental affairs. It appears, however, that occasionally the temporal and spiritual heads were both centered in the same person.

Hereditary chiefs did not rule the Mosquito Coast until after the establishment of British influence. One of these chiefs, a Miskito, was later raised to the rank of king; he became a tool in the hands of his foreign protectors, with whose aid his nominal authority was extended over the larger part of the coast. A silver crown and a scepter of little intrinsic value were bestowed upon him by the British authorities of Jamaica. The rule of the Miskito "king" was absolutely despotic. His orders were carried out by his quartermasters (*kwatmas*); the latter carried a cane or staff, which symbol of authority was apparently introduced by the English or Spaniards. A silver medal, sword, or anything else known to belong to the king would also do. Such a token established the credibility of the bearer and an immediate compliance with his orders. Foreign traders also applied to the king for such an object which served as a passport; every Indian was compelled to render him assistance, lodge him, sell him food, and furnish him with the means of continuing his journey, against reasonable pay. That the Indians of the interior did not pay much attention to such commands need hardly be told.

Besides the king, there were three other important rulers among the Miskito, who governed comparatively large areas and were known as "general," "governor," and "admiral." Numerous minor

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

Harpoons with floats attached are used for large fish and for manatees, 226
the latter being taken in the lagoons and at sea. Harpoons with long 225
retrieving lines but without floats are used for sea turtles. The *Sumo* lasso young crocodiles.

Domesticated animals.—No early source mentions dogs, but they are 231
now common. Pigs, sheep, goats, cattle, horses, and cats have been introduced. The people tame a great variety of wild birds and several species of mammals. The latter are even suckled by the women. Species of native bees are kept in hives near the houses.

Food preparation.—Food may be boiled, sometimes in coconut milk. 252
Meat and fish are broiled or roasted in hot ashes, and fish may be fried in coconut oil. The *Paya* fry green pineapple. Salt is used as a condiment but rarely as a preservative. Sauces of red peppers, lime, and salt are made by the *Mosquito*. The *Paya* use chili as a sauce or as a substitute for other food. Tamales are made of manioc. Maize dough, sometimes soured (*Mosquito*), is wrapped in leaves and baked. This and manioc dough may be made into tortillas, an item introduced into the region only in recent years. Manioc is made into bread, which is baked in the open fire.

Numerous beverages are made of liana sap, maize, honey, green plan- 272
tains, and the like. Some of these are made of a sour paste, which is diluted with water before it is eaten. Such food is usually carried while traveling. Alcoholic beverages are prepared in canoes (*Mosquito*) or log troughs 273
(*Paya*) and stored in earthenware pots. Fermentation is hastened in various ways, notably by chewing uncooked or cooked maize or manioc and spitting it into the mixture.

Preserving and storage of food.—Fish is dried in the sun and meat 251
is dried on a three-legged babracot. The *Mosquito* make a mixture of green bananas and pejibaye palm nuts which may be kept for 6 months or longer. It can be made into a beverage or baked as bread. The *Sumo* preserve boiled maize by steeping it in lye to remove the hull and then burying it. The *Sumo* also make up large parcels of maize or peeled bananas, which are placed in running water until partially fermented, then dried in the sun. Live turtles are kept in stockades in shallow water.

VILLAGES AND HOUSES

Mosquito villages (pl. 35, *bottom*) had between 100 and 500 inhabitants. [21]
Sumo villages appear to have been much smaller. Formerly, communal 342
houses, called "palenques," had compartments for each family. Some were about 40 by 80 feet (about 12.5 by 25 m.); smaller communal houses were built by the *Mosquito*. *Sumo* houses had an elaborately carved central post. House plans were rectangular, the ends being rounded, elliptical (*Paya*), or circular (*Mosquito* of Honduras). At the present

3: Pijoan D-5 (ca. 1945) 1946
SA15 Mosquito SA15

394 with reference to the head, a custom which had not been practiced by the Miskito. It is no longer performed by the Sumu during the present day.

● 621 629 There is no trace of any division in clans or exogamic kinship groups. Before the conquest, the Miskito were not ruled by supreme chiefs, but in time of war the elders would chose some young warrior, noted for prowess, to guide the activities of the group. Generally, though, they were not a warlike people. Hereditary chiefs were introduced by the British and the ruler became despotic in activity. His orders would be carried out by quarter masters *(kuatmas)* or by other members of his staff. Foreign traders extended gifts to the Chief (King) for trading privileges and the Indians rendered assistance and taxes. However, the Indians in the interior paid but little attention to this hierarchy. Today there are village chiefs who guide the civic affairs of the community on what appears to be a democratic basis. Decisions are made as a result of council meetings where considerable discussion may take place.

648 The governments of the two republics, Honduras and Nicaragua, have territorial representatives known as comandantes and these are *Ladinos* (see Appendix B). The comandante may have other *Ladinos* on his staff or as is often the case works in close collaboration with the traders. In the upper Coco River the comandante is stationed at San Carlos. He patrols the area, listens to complaints and his decisions are autocratic. He is in military uniform and his status is one of army discipline. The various companies, i. e., fruit enterprises, rubber development agencies, etc., have many *Ladino* foremen who work in close harmony with the comandante. From the Indian point of view considerable friction exists between himself and the government representative. Since the Indians have no recourse with the Central Government, the jurisdiction of their problems rests with the territorial representative. The Indian complains that there is misappropriation of funds and that traders take endless advantage of them. Regardless of right or wrong, conflict exists and as such it is probably due to the lack of peoples' representation in territorial jurisdiction. Government education is at minimum, the various religious missions have generally performed this service to the better satisfaction of the Indians. The Indians live with great equality, there appears to be no rich or poor among them; they do not strive to accumulate wealth.

[671]

[651]

674 626 Within the villages themselves government takes place with the elders guided by a chief. A thief is compelled to restore stolen property and an adulterer pays a fine of a gun or a cow. Stealing is rare, except in the more urban areas and adultery is uncovered usually as a result